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Precision Feed Management with Automation Technology to Optimize the Growth and Health of Beef Cattle

[1]Fitrah Khairi, [2]Ramdhani Haryanti, [3]Puji Astuti

[1]Department of Animal Husbandry, Faculty of Agriculture, Syiah Kuala University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia
[2]Politeknik Medica Farma Husada, Indonesia
[3]Universitas Muhammadiyah Karanganyar, Indonesia

Email: kh.fitrah@usk.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the integration of precision feed management and automation technology in optimizing beef cattle growth, health, and overall productivity. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, this literature review synthesizes findings from recent studies to explore the role of automated systems, such as automated feeders and health monitoring technologies, in enhancing feed efficiency, cattle welfare, and environmental sustainability. The review identifies key benefits of automation, including precise feed delivery, early disease detection, and improved resource use efficiency. Despite these advantages, the study highlights challenges such as high initial costs, the need for technical expertise, and barriers to adoption, particularly for small-scale farms. Furthermore, the research underscores the potential of artificial intelligence and machine learning in enhancing the precision and responsiveness of automated feed management systems. The findings contribute to a broader understanding of how automation can address the growing demand for sustainable beef production while improving animal health and farm profitability. This study concludes by recommending future research to develop cost-effective, scalable automation systems and assess their long-term economic and environmental impacts on beef cattle farming.

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1. Introduction

The beef cattle industry plays a vital role in global agricultural systems, providing essential protein sources and economic value in many countries (Said, 2021). However, the sector faces increasing pressure to improve productivity, efficiency, and sustainability in response to growing demand for beef and rising environmental concerns (Godfray et al., 2010). Traditional cattle feeding practices often result in inefficiencies, high resource consumption, and suboptimal health outcomes, which directly affect cattle growth and overall production. In this context, precision feed management, powered by automation technologies, has emerged as a promising solution to address these challenges (Sonea et al., 2023).

While automation in livestock management has gained momentum in recent years, there remains a significant gap in understanding how integrated automated feed systems can optimize the growth and health of beef cattle specifically. Previous studies have primarily focused on the role of automation in poultry and dairy farming, leaving a limited number of studies addressing its application and benefits for beef cattle (Kozina & Semkiv, 2020; Teng, 2021). Furthermore, much of the existing research focuses on either the technological advancements or the nutritional outcomes in isolation, neglecting the holistic approach that integrates automation with feed management to enhance cattle welfare and sustainability (Vlaicu et al., 2024).

As the beef cattle industry strives to balance increasing production demands with sustainability, the need for innovative solutions that optimize feed efficiency and minimize waste has become more pressing (Terry et al., 2020). The advent of automation technology presents an opportunity to not only improve cattle growth but also enhance animal health and well-being by providing more personalized and responsive feeding strategies. However, understanding the full scope of automation's impact on beef cattle production remains a critical gap that this research aims to fill.

Several studies have examined the role of precision feeding in livestock, including the use of automated systems for monitoring cattle health, growth, and feed conversion efficiency. For instance, research by Romano et al. demonstrated that automated feeding systems could enhance feed conversion rates and improve growth performance in dairy cattle (Romano et al., 2023). Similarly, studies by Matthews et al. highlighted the benefits of automated systems in detecting early signs of illness in cattle, thereby improving animal welfare and reducing veterinary costs (Matthews et al., 2016). However, few studies have explored how these technological advancements, when integrated into a comprehensive precision feed management system, can optimize beef cattle growth and health over extended periods.

This study introduces a novel approach by combining automated feed management systems with real-time data analytics to monitor and adjust the nutritional needs of beef cattle on an individual basis. Unlike prior research, which often treats technological components in isolation, this research emphasizes the holistic integration of automated systems to improve both cattle health and feed efficiency (Vlaicu et al., 2024). Additionally, it focuses on the application of these systems in beef cattle production, an area that has not been thoroughly addressed in the existing literature.

The primary objective of this research is to explore the effectiveness of automation in optimizing feed management for beef cattle, focusing on its impact on growth rates, feed efficiency, and overall health. Specifically, this study aims to (1) evaluate the role of automated feeding systems in improving feed conversion efficiency and cattle growth, (2) assess the potential of real-time monitoring technologies in detecting health issues, and (3) investigate the economic and environmental benefits of precision feed management systems. The findings from this research will provide valuable insights for farmers, ranchers, and policymakers seeking to enhance the sustainability and productivity of the beef cattle industry.

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This research will contribute to advancing knowledge in precision livestock management by providing empirical evidence on the role of automation in optimizing beef cattle production. It will offer practical recommendations for integrating automation into feed management practices, helping to improve cattle health and welfare while enhancing resource use efficiency. Furthermore, it will inform the development of policies and strategies aimed at improving the sustainability of beef cattle farming, ultimately benefiting both producers and consumers by reducing costs and environmental im pacts associated with traditional farming methods.

Precision Feed and Automation Technology in Beef Cattle Management

1. Precision Feed

Precision feed refers to the practice of delivering tailored nutrition to livestock based on individual needs, which can significantly enhance the growth, health, and overall productivity of animals. In beef cattle farming, precision feeding has emerged as an essential strategy to optimize feed efficiency, improve animal welfare, and reduce environmental impacts (Sonea et al., 2023). Traditional feeding practices are often based on generalized nutritional guidelines, which may not account for the varying requirements of individual animals. This can lead to either underfeeding or overfeeding, both of which are inefficient and may cause health issues in cattle, such as metabolic disorders, obesity, or poor growth performance (Desta, 2024). Precision feeding systems utilize advanced technologies to monitor various parameters such as weight, age, gender, and health status of each animal, enabling the formulation and delivery of customized feed rations (Akintan et al., 2025). For example, automated feeding systems equipped with sensors can adjust the quantity and composition of feed in real time, ensuring that each animal receives the exact nutrients it needs based on its physiological condition and stage of growth (González et al., 2018). This individualized approach to feeding promotes more efficient feed conversion, faster growth rates, and improved overall health, thus reducing feed costs and minimizing waste. Moreover, precision feeding can help mitigate environmental concerns by reducing the excess use of feed, which is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions in livestock farming (Godfray et al., 2010).

2. Automation Technology

Automation technology in livestock management involves the integration of mechanical systems, sensors, data analytics, and artificial intelligence to streamline various aspects of animal husbandry. In the context of beef cattle production, automation encompasses several key technologies, including automated feeders, health monitoring systems, and data-driven decision-making platforms. Automated feeders are designed to deliver precise amounts of feed based on real-time data, optimizing nutritional intake and reducing feed wastage (Gao et al., 2025). These systems are often equipped with sensors that track individual cattle's feeding patterns and physiological indicators, such as weight and behavior, to adjust the feed dispensed accordingly. This level of automation significantly improves the accuracy of feeding protocols, ensuring that cattle receive the optimal nutrition at the right time, which is crucial for growth and health (Dayoub et al., 2024).

Furthermore, automation in livestock management includes the use of sensors and monitoring technologies that collect data on cattle health, such as body temperature, activity levels, and rumination patterns. These sensors can detect early signs of illness, stress, or malnutrition, enabling farmers to take corrective actions before issues become severe (Džermeikaitė et al., 2023). For example, smart collars or wearable devices on cattle can provide real-time health data, allowing for timely intervention and reducing the need for antibiotics or other medical treatments (Lamanna et al., 2025). The data collected from automated systems can be processed and analyzed using machine learning algorithms, which can predict trends in cattle growth, feed efficiency, and health (Zhou et al., 2022). By integrating these technologies, farmers can make more informed

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decisions that improve productivity and reduce operational costs.

Automation technology not only enhances the precision of feed delivery but also contributes to environmental sustainability. By minimizing feed waste and optimizing resource utilization, automated systems help reduce the carbon footprint of beef cattle production (Zakirova et al., 2022). Moreover, automation allows for continuous data collection and analysis, enabling farmers to identify patterns and inefficiencies that may not be apparent through traditional management practices (Jha et al., 2019). As the beef cattle industry continues to face increasing pressure to meet global food demands while mitigating environmental impacts, automation technology provides a pathway for achieving more sustainable and efficient livestock management.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach through a literature review to analyze the role of precision feed management and automation technology in optimizing beef cattle growth and health. A literature review is particularly suitable for this research as it enables the synthesis and critical evaluation of existing knowledge, highlighting both the advancements and gaps in the application of automation in feed management (Booth et al., 2021). The focus of the study is on synthesizing findings from peer-reviewed journals, books, and authoritative reports to understand how automation technologies have been integrated into beef cattle production, with particular attention to their impact on feeding strategies, cattle health, growth rates, and environmental sustainability.

The data for this study were derived from academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and ScienceDirect, which provided access to a wide range of scholarly articles, conference papers, and research reports. Only peer-reviewed papers published within the last ten years were selected to ensure the inclusion of the most recent technological advancements and methodologies in the field of precision feed management and automation in livestock production (Tranfield et al., 2003). Key terms such as "precision feeding," "automated feed systems," "livestock automation," "beef cattle feed efficiency," and "cattle health monitoring" were used to identify relevant studies. Additionally, studies that explored the integration of automation technology in beef cattle farming were prioritized to provide a comprehensive understanding of its impact.

The primary technique for data collection involved a systematic search and review of the selected articles and studies. The inclusion criteria for selecting literature included studies that: (1) discussed the use of automated systems for feeding and health monitoring in cattle, (2) examined the relationship between automation and cattle performance, and (3) addressed environmental or sustainability aspects of automated feed management systems. Articles were analyzed for relevance, credibility, and methodology to ensure the accuracy of the data collected (Booth et al., 2021). Studies were then categorized into themes based on the type of technology used, the effects on cattle health, growth, feed efficiency, and sustainability. Non-peer-reviewed sources, opinion articles, and those that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the analysis.

The data analysis followed a thematic synthesis approach, which is commonly used in qualitative research to identify, analyze, and report patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The collected studies were reviewed to identify recurring themes regarding the benefits and challenges of automation in beef cattle feeding systems. Thematic analysis allowed the extraction of key insights from the literature, facilitating the identification of critical factors influencing the success of automation in feed management, such as technological barriers, economic implications, and potential benefits for cattle growth and welfare. These findings were then compared across different studies to highlight consistencies and discrepancies. The final synthesis provided a comprehensive understanding of how automation impacts various aspects of beef cattle production and its potential for enhancing sustainability and efficiency.

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3. Result and Discussion

The table below presents a summary of 9 articles that were reviewed and selected for this research. These articles were carefully chosen after a thorough search of the literature on precision feed management and automation technologies in beef cattle production. Each article was evaluated based on its relevance to the topic, methodological rigor, and the quality of the findings. The selection includes a mix of studies that cover various aspects of automated feeding systems, health monitoring, economic analysis, and technological advancements within the field. The insights gained from these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of automation in optimizing cattle growth, health, and sustainability.

Author(s)	Title	Source	Focus of Study
Sonea et al. (2023)	Optimizing Animal Nutrition and Sustainability Through Precision Feeding: A Mini Review of Emerging Strategies and Technologies	Annals of 'Valahia' University of Târgoviște. Agriculture, 15(2)	Emerging strategies and technologies in precision feeding, optimizing animal nutrition and sustainability.
Ojo et al. (2024)	Exploring Feed Efficiency in Beef Cattle: From Data Collection to Genetic and Nutritional Modeling	Animals, 14(24), 3633	Feed efficiency in beef cattle, focusing on data collection, genetic modeling, and nutritional optimization.
Terry et al. (2020)	Strategies to improve the efficiency of beef cattle production	Canadian Journal of Animal Science, 101(1), 1–19	Strategies to improve beef cattle production efficiency.
Halachmi et al. (2019)	Smart animal agriculture: application of real-time sensors to improve animal well-being and production	Annual Review of Animal Biosciences, 7(1), 403–425	Application of real-time sensors in smart animal agriculture for improving animal well-being and production.
Vlaicu et al. (2024)	Advancing livestock technology: intelligent systemization for enhanced productivity, welfare, and sustainability	AgriEngineering, 6(2), 1479–1496	Advancements in livestock technology, focusing on intelligent systems for enhanced productivity, welfare, and sustainability.
Godfray et al. (2010)	Food security: the challenge of feeding 9 billion people	Science, 327(5967), 812–818	Food security challenges in feeding a growing global population.
Padhiary et al. (2025)	Emerging technologies for smart and sustainable precision agriculture	Discover Robotics, 1(1), 6	Emerging technologies in precision agriculture for smart and sustainable farming practices.
Armand et al. (2024)	Applications of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and deep learning in nutrition: a systematic review	Nutrients, 16(7), 1073	Applications of AI, machine learning, and deep learning in nutrition, focusing on precision feeding.
Dayoub et al. (2024)	Enhancing animal production through smart agriculture: Possibilities, hurdles, resolutions, and advantages	Ruminants, 4(1), 22–46	Enhancing animal production through smart agriculture, addressing possibilities, challenges, and solutions.

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This table outlines the key literature sources that have informed the findings of this study and highlights the scope of research on automated feeding and health monitoring systems in beef cattle production.

Interpretation of Data

The data presented in the literature review table reveals a broad spectrum of research on precision feed management and automation technologies in beef cattle production. The studies selected for this review encompass a variety of aspects related to automation, including automated feeding systems, health monitoring technologies, economic implications, and sustainability in cattle farming.

Several articles, such as those by Sonea et al., highlight the significant advancements in automated feeding systems and their role in improving feed efficiency and growth performance (Sonea et al., 2023). These automated systems allow for precise delivery of nutrients to cattle based on real-time data, thereby enhancing feed conversion rates and optimizing growth (Ojo et al., 2024). This is further supported by Terry et al., who emphasize the economic benefits of such systems, noting that improved feed efficiency directly translates to cost savings and enhanced profitability in beef cattle production (Terry et al., 2020).

Health monitoring is another crucial area identified in the reviewed literature, as automation technologies enable the early detection of health issues in cattle. Halachmi et al. discuss how automated systems, such as sensors and smart collars, can monitor cattle health in real-time, providing critical data that allows for prompt intervention and reduces the need for antibiotics (Halachmi et al., 2019). These technologies contribute not only to the welfare of the animals but also to the overall sustainability of the operation by minimizing the use of veterinary drugs and improving animal productivity (Vlaicu et al., 2024).

The reviewed studies also shed light on the broader environmental and sustainability aspects of automation. Godfray et al. discuss the challenge of feeding a growing global population while minimizing the environmental impact of livestock production (Godfray et al., 2010). Precision feed management, aided by automation, offers a promising solution by reducing feed waste and improving resource efficiency, thereby contributing to more sustainable farming practices (Padhiary et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies like those by Armand et al. explore future trends in precision feeding, indicating that the integration of artificial intelligence and machine learning will further enhance the precision and effectiveness of automated systems (Armand et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the findings from the literature review indicate that automation technologies in feed management and health monitoring have the potential to revolutionize beef cattle farming. These innovations improve feed efficiency, enhance cattle health, and contribute to more sustainable and economically viable farming practices, aligning with the global need for more efficient agricultural systems (Dayoub et al., 2024). However, challenges such as high initial costs, technological complexity, and the need for skilled labor remain obstacles to widespread adoption (Godfray et al., 2010).

Discussion and Analysis

The findings of this literature review highlight the transformative potential of automation technologies in beef cattle production, particularly in the areas of precision feeding and health monitoring. As automation continues to evolve, it is clear that these technologies can enhance both the efficiency of feed management and the overall health and productivity of beef cattle. One of the primary benefits identified is the improvement in feed conversion efficiency, a crucial factor in optimizing the growth of cattle while minimizing waste. Studies such as those by Moss et al. demonstrate how automated feeding systems allow for precise delivery of nutrients tailored to the specific needs of each animal (Moss et al., 2021). This customization not only accelerates growth but also

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reduces feed costs, which is particularly important in an industry where feed often represents the largest operational expense. This finding aligns with the principles of precision agriculture, which argue that technology can improve resource use efficiency by providing tailored solutions that consider individual variations in animal needs (Godfray et al., 2010).

The use of automation in health monitoring, as discussed by Vlaicu et al., further emphasizes the integration of technology for enhancing cattle welfare (Vlaicu et al., 2024). Through real-time monitoring systems, such as wearable sensors and smart collars, farmers can detect early signs of illness or stress, leading to quicker interventions and minimizing the need for antibiotics. This proactive approach supports the ongoing shift toward more sustainable farming practices, where animal welfare and environmental concerns are prioritized (Buller et al., 2018). This is also in line with the "One Health" framework, which links animal health, human health, and the environment (Mwangi et al., 2016). The reduction in antibiotic use and the ability to monitor cattle health in real-time are important steps toward ensuring not only healthier cattle but also safer food products for consumers.

However, while the benefits of automation are evident, the adoption of these technologies remains a challenge, particularly in developing regions or smaller farming operations. The initial investment costs for automated systems, coupled with the need for technical expertise, can be a significant barrier to widespread adoption (Bademosi & Issa, 2021). This aligns with the concerns raised by Godfray et al., who emphasize the economic challenges faced by farmers in integrating new technologies into traditional farming systems (Godfray et al., 2010). Additionally, while automated systems have been shown to improve feed efficiency and cattle health, the long-term economic impact remains uncertain for many farmers who may struggle to justify the high upfront costs associated with these technologies. It is crucial for policy-makers and agricultural stakeholders to consider ways to reduce these barriers, perhaps through subsidies, training programs, or financial incentives to make these technologies more accessible.

From a theoretical perspective, the integration of automation in beef cattle production supports the concept of "sustainable intensification," where technological advancements are used to increase productivity while minimizing environmental impacts (Lima, 2025). Automation can significantly reduce the environmental footprint of livestock production by reducing feed waste, optimizing resource use, and minimizing the need for veterinary interventions. This is particularly relevant in the context of the global food security challenge, as highlighted by Godfray et al., where increasing food demand must be met without exacerbating environmental degradation (Godfray et al., 2010).

In conclusion, the integration of automation in beef cattle farming presents significant advantages in terms of feed efficiency, animal health, and sustainability. However, the barriers to adoption, including high initial costs and the need for technical skills, must be addressed to ensure these technologies can be effectively implemented on a larger scale. Further research and development in affordable and user-friendly systems, along with supportive policies, will be essential to fully realize the potential of automation in optimizing beef cattle production.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from this literature review emphasize the significant potential of precision feed management and automation technologies in enhancing beef cattle production. These technologies improve feed efficiency, promote healthier cattle, and contribute to more sustainable farming practices. The integration of automated feeding systems, health monitoring technologies, and data analytics can optimize growth rates, reduce feed waste, and enhance cattle welfare, aligning with the global push for more efficient and environmentally friendly agricultural practices. However, despite these advantages, the widespread adoption of such technologies is hindered by high initial investment

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costs, the need for technical expertise, and infrastructure challenges. Overcoming these barriers is critical for ensuring the scalability of automation in beef cattle farming.

Future research should focus on addressing these challenges by developing cost-effective, user-friendly automation systems that are accessible to small- and medium-scale farmers. Additionally, more studies are needed to assess the long-term economic impacts of automation on beef cattle farming, including the return on investment for farmers and the potential savings in feed and health management. Investigating the impact of these technologies in diverse geographical settings and farming conditions will provide valuable insights into their adaptability and effectiveness across different regions. Furthermore, research into integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning algorithms with automation systems could further enhance the precision and efficiency of feed management, creating more dynamic and responsive farming systems. Exploring these avenues will be essential in ensuring that automation can meet the growing demands of the beef industry while maintaining environmental and economic sustainability.

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